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TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, JULY 22, 1885.

If the promoters of the Scott Act are wise they will not submit the Act in counties that have a large German or Catholic population. The Germans vote against it almost to a man, at least so we are informed. As a rule the Catholics vote against it, too. Something, however, depends on the influence of the local priest. Should he be in favour of the Act a number of his people are likely to go with him in spite of Archbishop Lynch's letter. Now that it is known that the German and Catholic votes may be counted against local prohibition the fact should be taken into consideration in submitting the Act. There is no use in courting defeat. In all counties in which the Methodist and Presbyterian element predominates the Act, under anything like sensible management, can be carried by a large majority. That is exactly how the matter stands, and those directly engaged in submitting the law to the people should govern themselves accordingly. There is no sense in playing into the hands of the enemy by submitting the law where the balance of power is held by elements that are certain to go against prohibition. That may seem brave but it is not wise.

THE Scott Act agitation seems to have developed a marvellous regard for Scriptural authority in the minds of a class of men who never were noted for anything of that kind before. Men who, it is to be feared, rarely read their Bibles, who certainly never darkened a church door, who never used the name of their Saviour except to feather an oath are found quoting quite glibly what they call the example of Christ and the teaching of the Apostles. It is a somewhat suspicious circumstance, however, that the one act of our Lord's life on which their minds seem to rest most is the making of wine at Cana. Our Lord spake as never man spake, and the four records of His life are full of His sayings, but strangely enough these new converts go instinctively to the allegation of His enemies about His habits of eating and drinking. Paul wrote a great many good things, but this class of anti-prohibition people go past all the high doctrine and sound moral precepts to that advice about the state of Timothy's stomach. There is nothing in Paul's writings they admire so much as His prescription for Timothy's dyspepsia. That was probably the smallest point Paul ever discussed. Well, if those anti-prohibitionists who confine their reading to these points would just extend their Bible studies and imbibed the spirit of the Master and of Paul all will be well.

THE return of the Volunteers this week awakens mingled feelings of gratitude and grief. Grateful we certainly ought to be for several things. That so many of our citizen-soldiers have returned in safety is of itself a matter that should cause feelings of thank-

fulness. We should be thankful that the insurrection was so speedily put down. Many thought that it would take all summer to quell the Half-breeds and perhaps years to quiet the Indians. Both have been done in three months. We should be grateful as well as proud of the endurance and pluck displayed by the Volunteers. The manner in which they stood those fearful marches shows that Canadian muscle is just about as good as the Old Country article, while the dash with which they charged the rifle-pits at Batoche proves that the spirit of the old sires is still found in Canadian sons. All honour to our citizen-soldiers. Whatever caused the rebellion, they were sent by their country to put it down, and they bravely did their duty. But let us not forget that all did not come home, and that some were brought home in their coffins. Amidst the general rejoicing the well-known lines come irresistibly to one's mind:

The people's shouts were long and loud,  
My mother, shuddering, closed her ears,  
Rejoice, rejoice, still cried the crowd,  
"My mother answered with her tears.

That old scene was re-enacted in a good many Canadian homes during the past few days. Whilst the banners are waving, and the bands playing, and the crowds cheering, let us never forget the families that have lost their bread-winner, and the homes to which the soldier-boy never returns.

THE following are the questions in History set for the entrance examinations to the High Schools. The time given for answering them was an hour and a quarter. Just fancy a lad of about ten beginning to wrestle with this paper, knowing that he had but an hour and fifteen minutes to answer these eight questions:

1. Give an account of the coming of the English into Britain.
2. State the causes and results of the Wars of the Roses.
3. Show that Elizabeth's reign marked the beginning of a new state of things in England.
4. Outline the course of the English Revolution, stating its causes and its results.
5. Sketch the career of William Pitt, the elder. Describe the condition of England when he was at the head of her affairs.
6. Name the wars of England which directly concerned her North American colonies. Give an account of any one of them.
7. Show the truth of the statement that England and Canada are now governed by the people. Show also that this has not always been the condition of matters.
8. What makes an event or a person important in the history of a nation? Why is each of the following important in the history of the English nation: Hampden, Henry VIII., Wilberforce, Chaucer, the Treaty of Paris, and the French Revolution.

There may be boys in the public schools of Ontario who could come somewhat near answering these questions in an hour and a quarter, but Macaulay couldn't accomplish any such feat. In fact, Macaulay found material enough in Number 5 for one of his longest essays and we are sure he did not write that essay in an hour and a quarter. The first part of Number 8 admits of a great variety of answers. The number of things that makes a person "important in the history of a nation" is almost infinite. One way is to shoot some person already important. Guiteau got his importance in that way.

**SCIENCE AND PRAYER.**

AMONG a number of able contributions to the current number of the *Presbyterian Review* is one by Principal MacVicar, of Montreal, on "Science and Prayer," which will reward careful perusal. This superior theological quarterly has enlisted the services of the ablest Presbyterian scholars in Europe and America, and the Canadian Church has abundant reason for satisfaction that she possesses not a few scholarly theological thinkers, conversant with the scientific and religious problems occupying intelligent minds of the age. Christian truth is sometimes presented in such forms that many turn from it contemptuously. In this they may not be without blame, but it is a patent fact nevertheless. It is perfectly true we need a sanctified ministry, but it is no less true that the times emphatically demand a ministry possessed of a solid and comprehensive education. It may be that good pious men whose capabilities and opportunities have been limited speak slightly of natural gifts and acquired advantages; but in doing so they speak foolishly if not presumptuously.

Dr. MacVicar is not a man whose education is "finished." He is as diligent a student as in the days of

his youthful enthusiasm. He is not afraid to face the difficulties and to master the teachings of modern scientific research. He appreciates what permanent discoveries it has made; he estimates its spirit and comprehends its dreadfully matter-of-fact inclination and properly estimates its trend. Whilst there is no disposition to disparage the naturalistic science now in the ascendant. There is no petty carping, no inclination to decry or ridicule the pretensions of even the most self-satisfied or complacent of its professors. Personally they are treated with the respect that one scholar owes another, while their theories and teachings are subjected to calm philosophic scrutiny.

The subject of Dr. MacVicar's paper is one of great practical interest. It treats the difficulties urged by certain minds against prayer. There is a general assumption that the exercise of prayer is incompatible with the teachings of modern science. The postulates in which this sophism is expressed are taken up separately and disposed of in a clear and masterly way. There is no dexterous evasion of a difficulty, it is squarely met and in each case successfully disposed of. It too often happens that disquisitions of the nature now commented on are dry and cumbrous in style, wearying even to the sympathetic reader. Dr. MacVicar's style is not only in strict accordance with the requirements of scientific discussion, but is vigorous, trenchant and sententious, having also the merit of being easily intelligible to the average reader.

The paper discusses in succession the following current objections to prayer: (1) It is needless; (2) The logic of statistics is supposed to show prayer to be useless; (3) It is alleged that prayer fails when tested by the experimental methods of science; (4) It is urged especially in the name of science that answers to prayer are wholly incompatible with the uniformity of natural laws; (5) It is alleged that answers to prayer are incredible because they demand a belief in miracles, to which modern science is opposed; and (6) It is agreed that men have frequently been imposed upon by pretended miracles, said to have been wrought in answer to prayer, and, therefore, we can have no confidence in it.

These various objections are taken up and carefully considered, and the necessity and reasonableness of prayer demonstrated. Dr. MacVicar's method of treatment finds a good illustration in the following:

For example, Professor Tyndall says: "The dispersion of the slightest mist by the special volition of the Eternal would be as great a miracle as the stoppage of an eclipse or the rolling of the St. Lawrence up the Falls of Niagara. No act of humiliation, individual or national, could call one shower from heaven or deflect toward us a single beam of the sun." Certainly not; and Tyndall might have added that science is equally helpless, even all the sciences combined cannot bring us a shower from heaven; but God can, and God has promised to do so in answer to prayer, and we believe that He is true to His promise. We know that He has already answered such prayers, and can do so again. And as to the cases supposed, that of having the St. Lawrence roll up the Falls of Niagara, and that of praying for rain, they are obviously and fundamentally different. We can see no good purpose to be served by the reversal of the torrent of Niagara, and we have no reason to expect God to work miracles for the amusement of men or to gratify their craving for the wonderful. While on the other hand there are many beneficent ends which might be accomplished under special and exceptional circumstances by the descent of a copious rain. Besides, God has not promised the stoppage of an eclipse, or the reversal of the stream of the Niagara; and if we are twitted upon our inability to effect such marvels by prayer, this is the reason, and one which common sense and reverence for the Divine majesty will approve. We are not at all ashamed to decline the challenge, and refuse to go about to organize a union prayer meeting, to ask for either of these wonders, because there is a vast and essential difference between asking according to our own whim, and pleading God's sacred promise. In this connection it is well to emphasize the scientific conclusion formulated in our Shorter Catechism, that prayer is to be offered only "for things agreeable to God's will."

**NATIONAL ASSIMILATION.**

NOT so very long ago the American Republic was supposed to assimilate the different races that sought a home for themselves in the New World. Freedom was in the air, and new-comers, leaving behind them the narrow ideas and antiquated habits of their old homes, became rapidly Americanized. It was their proud boast that they were American citizens. Their patriotism was of the most demonstrative kind. The native American in his devotion to country was tame in comparison.

The large influx of Irish people, however, has altered this state of things in many respects. They change their home but not their characteristics. They